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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

September 19, 1957

Personal and Confidential

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MEMORANDUM FOR: The Secretary of Defense
The Director of Defense Mobilization
The Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff
The Director of Central Intelligence ✓

The President expects to issue a public statement relative to the tenth anniversary of the coming into effect of the National Security Act, which became law in September, 1947. The first meeting of the National Security Council was held on September 26, 1947.

I thought you might like to see a copy of the text of the statement as it has been now approved by the President. This text will be presented to the National Security Council at its meeting next Monday and will be issued publicly thereafter.

Bo
Robert Cutler
Special Assistant
to the President

Attachment
As stated.

Draft September 18/57

Proposed Presidential Statement
on the
Tenth Anniversary of the National Security Act

The National Security Act of 1947 became effective ten years ago this month.

Enacted by a Republican Congress and approved by a Democratic President, this bipartisan statute has shown how a free nation can organize to preserve its national security and at the same time retain and strengthen its democratic values and institutions. The organization established under the Act has contributed to continuing United States efforts since the Second World War for just and lasting peace in the world.

The National Security Act provided for the first time a comprehensive program for the security of the United States through unified direction of our military services and through coordination at the national level of national security policies, foreign intelligence, and defense mobilization. In the decade that is past, the Act has been strengthened several times and much has been accomplished under its provisions. In the years ahead, continuing effort will bring further strength to the framework which the Act created and accumulated experience should provide the basis for further improving the Act itself.

A basic purpose of the National Security Act was to provide "authoritative coordination and unified direction under civilian control of the Secretary of Defense" of the military departments. Under this Constitutional concept of a single civilian head, the United States is effectively maintaining the most powerful military establishment in our peacetime history.

Under the Act, a Chairman presides over the Joint Chiefs of Staff, who are the professional military advisors to the President, the National Security Council, and the Secretary of Defense on national security matters.

The Department of the Air Force was established by the National Security Act in recognition of the important role of air power. Today the Air Force is equal partner of the Army and the Navy in the defense of our country.

The National Security Act also created the structure of the National Security Council--an entirely new concept in our national government--a mechanism to advise the President, as he might elect, in the integration of domestic, foreign, and military factors in national security policies. The Council's subordinate units, such as the Planning

Board, the Operations Coordinating Board, and its two internal security committees, enable responsible Executive departments and agencies to cooperate effectively in developing and executing national security policies. The non-partisan career NSC Staff, headed by a civilian Executive Secretary, provides objective analyses, administrative services, and continuity to the Council's staff work.

The Act further provided that the Director of Central Intelligence, under the direction of the National Security Council, should bring to the attention of the President and Council intelligence information concerning developments abroad affecting our national security. The Central Intelligence Agency, with the cooperation of the intelligence organizations of the various departments and agencies, has made great strides toward building a comprehensive foreign intelligence system commensurate with the responsibilities of the United States in the world today.

The National Security Act set up a mechanism to plan and prepare for the mobilization of our military, industrial and civilian resources, as required by the world situation. The Director of the Office of Defense Mobilization coordinates these mobilization plans and preparations, with the assistance of the other interested departments and agencies represented on the Defense Mobilization Board.

Today, we salute the foresight of those who conceived the goals set forth in the National Security Act of 1947. We should also thank the countless individuals who have sought to put its provisions into effect.

The goals of the Act can be attained only through continued determination by all concerned to pool their resources and special skills, and reasonably to reconcile their differences, in order to serve our common cause--the national security of the United States in a free and peaceful community of nations. This tenth anniversary of the National Security Act challenges American leadership to achieve these goals.